



# PLAN JEFFCO UPDATE

AUGUST 2021

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## PROTECTING, PRESERVING, PROVIDING

## CLEAR CREEK

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The Jefferson County Open Space (JCOS) program contains a number of jewels. Probably the most easily recognized is Clear Creek Canyon. A railroad was built in the Canyon in the 1880s to serve Georgetown and Central City. Besides serving the destination communities the railroad became one of Colorado's first tourist attractions with a dance hall built along the south side about 7 miles into the canyon, along with stops to serve hikers and picnickers. The railroad operated until the depression of the 1930s. The rails were taken up for steel during World War II. The present highway, using much of the railroad bed, was built in the late 1940s and early 1950s. I remember taking the highway to Central City during the first month that it was open.

When PLAN Jeffco was organizing for the 1972 election our brochure clearly showed Clear Creek as desirable open space. For the first 18 years of JCOS, with one or two exceptions, all properties acquired were brought to the program by willing sellers. In 1990, the Open Space Advisory Committee and staff began to be proactive relative to acquisitions. They focused on the mountain backdrop, from the Boulder County line to Turkey Creek, the Bear Creek corridor, the Clear Creek corridor, and North Table Mountain. One constraint in Clear Creek was a rezoning application for a rock quarry adjacent to Guy Gulch on the creek's north side. PLAN Jeffco and many other organizations challenged the rezoning, and after

## CLEAR CREEK

a few years the Commissioners turned it down. PLAN Jeffco then took advantage of the opportunity and submitted a proposal to JCOS in 1992 to acquire 14 properties, totaling 4300 acres, plus an easement for the CDOT right of way, reaching close to the ridge lines along Clear Creek.

Acquisitions began in 1995 (see Figure 1). The 1998 Bond Issue enabled making major acquisitions in 1999 including all of Centennial Cone. By 2004, JCOS had acquired all of the undeveloped property at the bottom of the canyon.

The next task was determining what to develop and how to do it. JCOS also prepared a management plan for the canyon park. The plan considered the majority of the canyon to be a Natural Area, to be managed in a way that preserved the habitat for wildlife such as golden eagles and bighorn sheep. Additionally, it is also managed to provide recreation opportunities that are trail-, water-, and cliff-based. Due to the abundance of cliff habitat and steep slopes, human use would be limited to the canyon bottom, except for activities such as climbing. The Sensitive Area is restricted to a section of Indian Gulch that is known to contain a threatened plant species, the Ute lady's tresses (*spiranthes diluvialis*) orchid.

A design firm was retained in 2005 to develop a conceptual plan (see figures on the next page) and estimate the cost for various sections of a trail through the canyon. The plan included

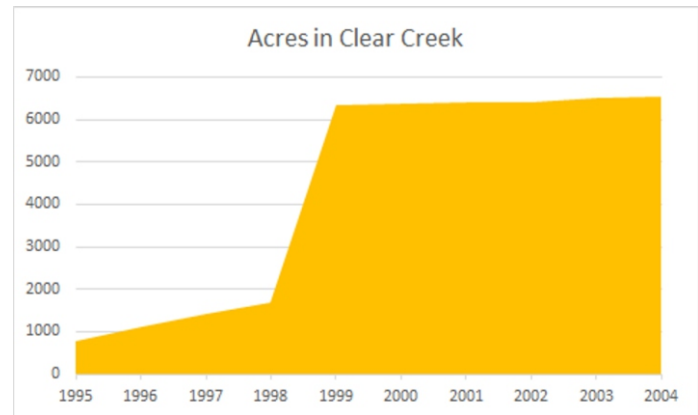
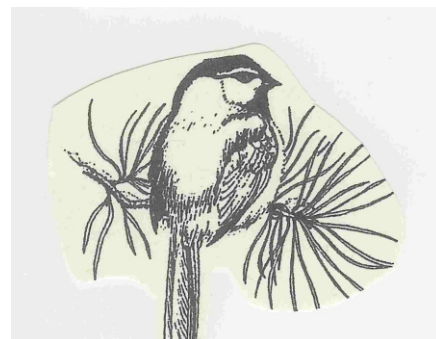


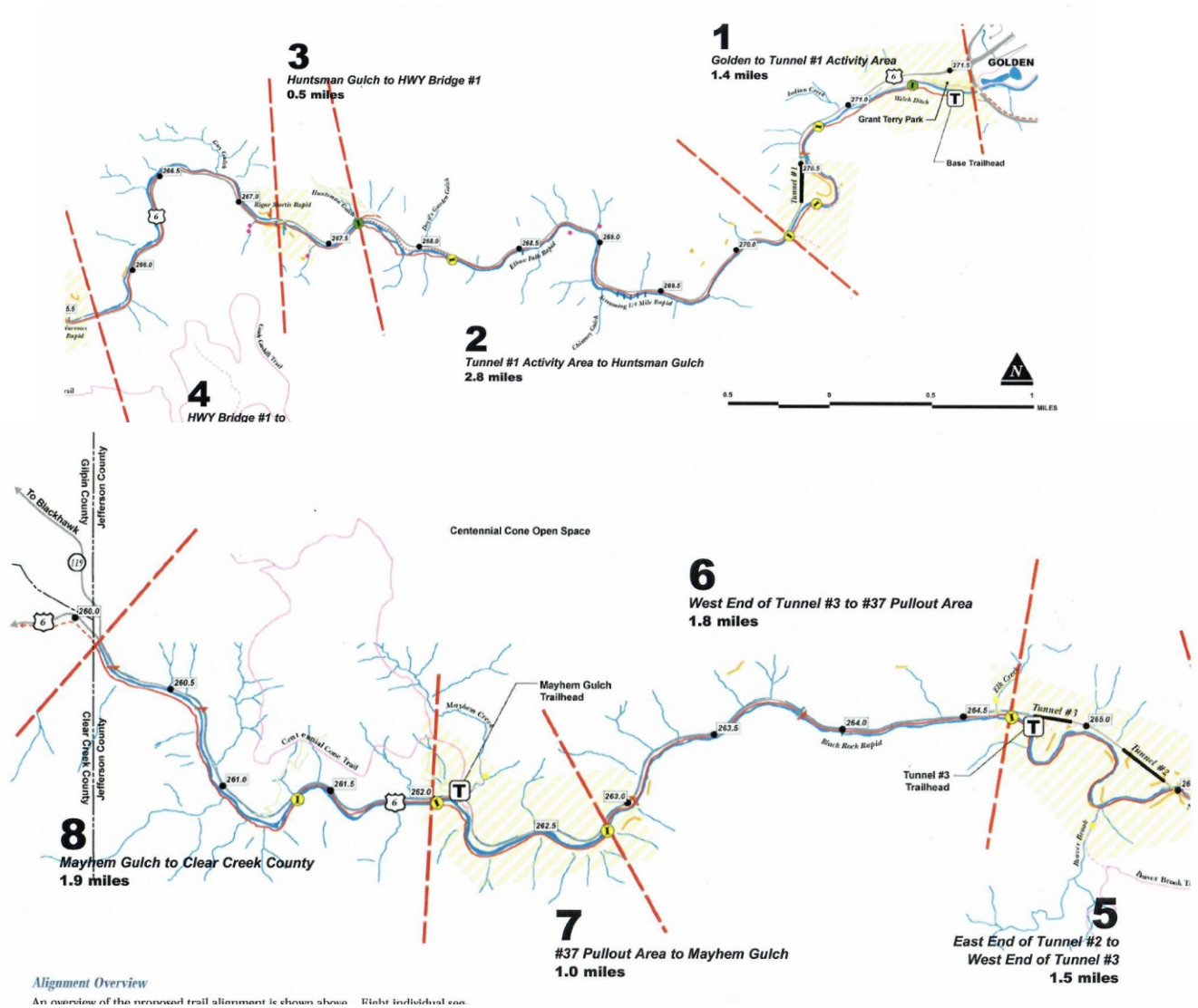
Figure 1

parking, trail and water access at Mayhem Gulch, parking just west of Tunnel 3, parking and water access about one mile west of Tunnel 1, and development of the canyon entrance with parking, plus trail and water access.

For the next 7 years JCOS funds were limited due to servicing the 1998 bonds. However, in 2012, the sales tax revenues had increased, and it appeared that JCOS could provide matching funds to grants. Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) announced a special River Corridors Initiative to foster outdoor recreation and land preservation along Colorado's rivers. JCOS and Clear Creek County applied for and were awarded a \$4.6 million GOCO/Lottery grant for trail construction projects through the canyon that would result in increased public access and safety. The goal was that up to six miles of trail could be constructed, including about one mile in Clear Creek County



# CLEAR CREEK - Continued



**Alignment Overview**  
An overview of the proposed trail alignment is shown above. Right: individual sections.

Construction began in January 2014 and the trail from Tunnel 5 in Clear Creek County to Mayhem Gulch was completed in June 2016. The trail then was extended about one mile east which allowed development of the Big Easy Trailhead and picnic area. The extension was completed in September 2017. The total cost of these two sections of trail and amenities was \$25 million.

Planning for the Mouth of the Canyon Master Plan began in January 2017. This section included a 1.75-mile segment of the Peaks to Plains trail, from end of concrete in Golden to west of Tunnel 1, two parking areas and improvements to the Welch Ditch Trail.

Construction started in April 2019 with completion in August 2021. The estimated cost for this section was \$30 million. Grants from the Denver Regional Council of Governments (\$9.75 million), GOCO (\$2 million), and the CDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (\$850,000) have provided more than one-third of the cost.

Preliminary engineering has been started on the next section, Tunnel 1 to Huntsman Gulch, a stretch of about 2.5 miles.

John Litz



# GOLTRA ACQUISITION

Ren Goltra has been investing in Foothills properties on the North side of Clear Creek for about 50 years. Other than the 1980s, when he was trying to get a portion rezoned for a rock quarry, he has been an excellent steward of the properties. The 1998 bond issue allowed Jefferson County Open Space to begin acquiring properties in the Clear Creek corridor. During the negotiations for the Goltra portion adjacent to the north side of Clear Creek west of tunnel 3, he offered nearly all of his property west of Guy Gulch for sale to Open Space. Centennial Cone Park is the result of this negotiation.

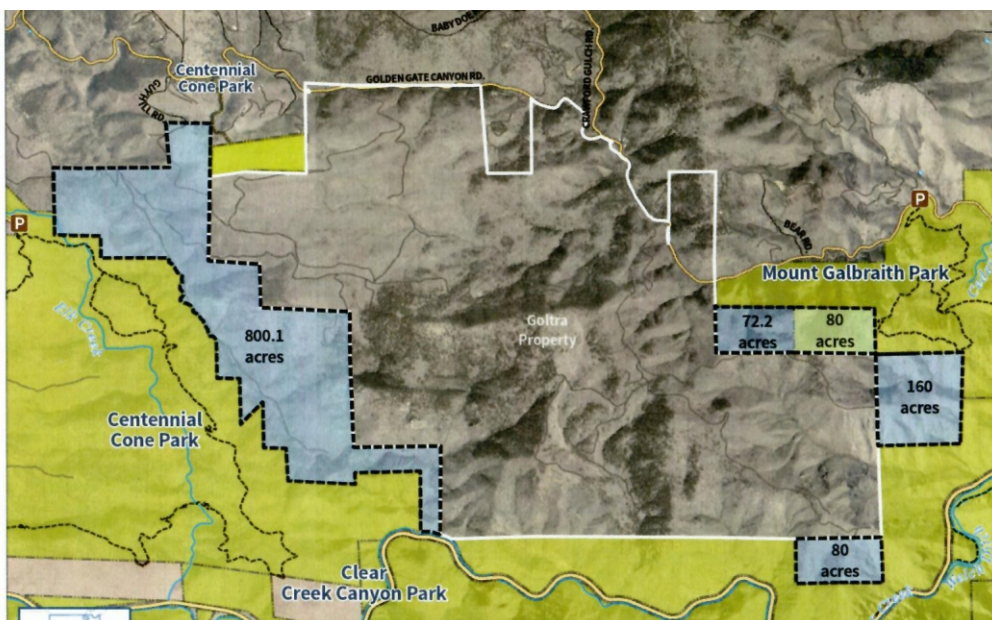
JCOS has been in regular communication with Goltra since this purchase. Most of the remaining 4,000+ acres is in a trust for younger generations. About one-fourth of the property was not in the trust, and the upcoming change in the IRS tax rate for capital gains at the beginning of 2022, provided incentive for this portion to be sold this calendar year. The image below shows the four properties (shown in blue) that will be included in this 1,192-acre acquisition. Portions of the

Property include a prominent valley and ridgeline that is visible from Centennial Cone Park. The property provides habitat for a variety of species including black bear, mountain lion, elk, mule deer and wild turkey. JCOS already had a conservation easement on an 80-acre portion of this land that contains Ute lady's tresses (*spiranthes diluvialis*) orchid habitat.

This acquisition offers an opportunity for future trails and regional connections to three adjacent JCOS Parks. It also achieves several priorities in the Conservation Greenprint, including Goal 4 - Land Acquisition and Goal 9 - Park System Trail Expansion.

The Advisory Committee adopted Resolution #21-09, approving the acquisition of the Centennial Cone Park - Guy Gulch property for \$14,543,750, and recommended the proposal to the Board of County Commissioners for approval.

John Litz.



## STEWARDSHIP ACADEMY--OFF TO A GOOD START

PLAN Jeffco's inaugural session of its Stewardship Academy got off to a good start this past spring. Starting the first Tuesday evening of May, Academy participants met via Zoom for 6 weeks, during which they learned about Jefferson County ecology and ecosystems; threats to biodiversity and ecosystems both within and outside of the Open Space Parks; and the Jefferson County Open Space program, how it got started, how it functions, and where it's heading in the foreseeable future. There were healthy discussions about the Open Space Parks and how visitors experience them, as well as ideas on how to take care of our open lands, inside and outside of the Parks.

Presenters included subject matter experts from PLAN Jeffco, Jefferson County Open Space, Colorado Open Lands, the Wilderness Society, the Urban Prairies Project of the Butterfly Pavilion, and the Institute for Environmental Solutions. Many thanks to all our presenters, who received rave reviews from the participants.

*"Very informative on all fronts."  
"It was special studying the ecology of our open*

*spaces and learning ways in which we can be stewards of the lands. It was fun learning with others who share a passion for open spaces. The speakers were knowledgeable. I especially enjoyed the Conservation Easement and Amphibian speakers."*

The 7-week program wrapped up with a Stewardship Project on an evening in mid-June, when the Academy participants and the PLAN Jeffco Academy team met in person at the Lookout Mountain Nature Preserve for a fun session with Ranger Maria, who provided training and guidance in mullein removal. Our project, which involved tramping around the Nature Preserve, oohing and aahing over the wildflowers while deadheading last year's mullein crop or digging out the new growth, was a terrific way to wind up a truly meaningful learning experience.

### NEXT STEPS

PLAN Jeffco is planning to continue to conduct the Stewardship Academy next spring. When asked what additional topics should be covered, the participants were generous with their suggestions:

## Participant Responses to Questionnaire

### I signed up for the Stewardship Academy because:

*4 responses*

I like to stay informed about open space information from diverse perspectives

I've been conducting a review of the Jeffco Open Space Program with another member of the League of Women Voters and I wanted to learn more about the workings of the program. We'll present the review to six different League of Women Voters Units in Jeffco in November.

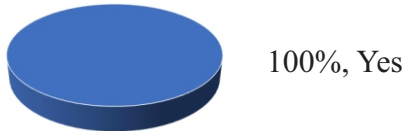
It offered up the opportunity to learn about the history and management of JeffCo Open Space, and, of possible volunteer opportunities.

To learn more about the origins of the open space program in Jeffco. These open space parks are jewels!

## Participant Responses to Questionnaire

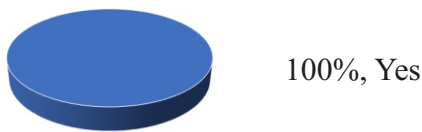
### The Stewardship Academy met my expectations.

4 responses



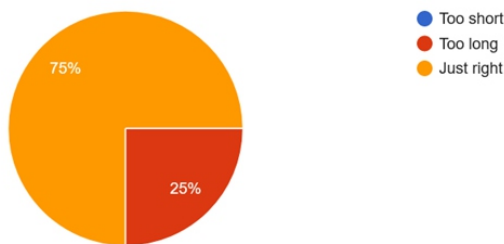
### Speakers were informative and engaging.

4 responses



### The length of the sessions was:

4 responses



### Suggested readings and explorations between sessions were:

4 responses



### My thing I liked most about the Stewardship Academy was:

4 responses

The interaction and follow-up questions and answers to the presentations

meeting up in person to play the Native/Invasive Plant Game and to pull mullein.

Everything - very informative on all fronts.

Getting background education, such as the effort of the League of Women Voters of Jeffco to get legislation promoted and ballot initiatives done.

### The thing I liked least about the Stewardship Academy was:

4 responses

It had to be online.

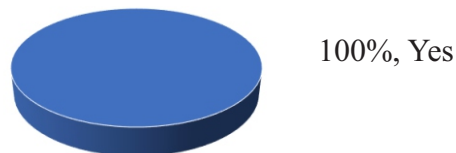
I enjoyed every aspect.

I would suggest keeping the sessions to an hour, or 1.5 hours, as we've all spent so much time on Zoom, etc. sessions during the day. Perhaps, add in a couple more sessions to get it all in!?!?

Well having to complete most of the class online, due to the pandemic.

### I would recommend the Stewardship Academy to others.

4 responses



## *Participant Responses to Questionnaire, continued*

### **I would like to see these topics covered in future sessions:**

*4 responses*

What Jeffco Open Space natural resources might look like in 2050 given what trends we know, and a "look back" to 2021 and what "those people (we) should have been doing."

I would like to have a session covering native plants and their corresponding pollinators. It would be fun to learn which plants are host plants to which insects.

It would be great to have more on the diversity of wildlife and plants and how we can be even better stewards of such. And, you can never have enough on how to be a good trail buddy/safety/courtesy/honoring the environment, etc.

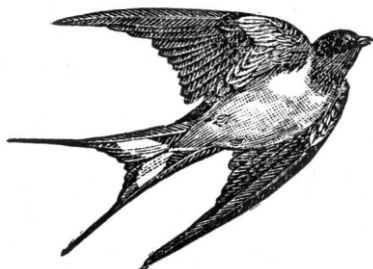
I don't know really. But I did enjoy learning about conservation easements.

### **I heard about the Stewardship Academy through (social media, PLAN Jeffco newsletter, other - please describe)**

*4 responses*

Plan Jeffco and an email

Bette Seeland, one of the original members of PLAN Jeffco told me about the class.



I believe it came via my email - I'll have to look.

It was from PLAN Jeffco newsletter.

### **Please provide any other comments or suggestions for how we can improve the Stewardship Academy.**

*3 responses*

It was special studying the ecology of our open spaces and learning ways in which we can be stewards of the lands. It was fun learning with others who share a passion for open spaces. The speakers were knowledgeable. I especially enjoyed the Conservation Easement and Amphibian speakers.

It would be cool to have another plant mitigation, or trail maintenance opportunity at the end of the Academy. It was wonderful to meet/see folks in person and do something useful at the Lookout Mountain Nature Center.

(1) There probably should be discussion of the readings and assignments in the sessions, (2) some presenters were precise and monitored their time and a couple of them less so, recognizing that this is a presentation skill, (3)





# OSAC Notes, OSAC Notes, OSAC Notes

## May 6, 2021

Study Session Field trip to Tincup Park, the area between Rooney Road, the East side of the hogback, and south of Colfax to I-70. The trip was a hike to the south end of the hogback to observe the paleontological resources.

Regular Session: JCOS had purchased the right of way under the Public Service power lines on the Western portion of South Table Mountain, with Public Service retaining a 150-foot wide access agreement to service the lines. The terrain makes using the access difficult. Public Service desired to realign the access road to provide better access. JCOS will realign the Dome Flow trail to not conflict with the access road. OSAC approved.

The Advisory Committee approved the following changes to the park regulations.

## New Regulations

### **Group Size on Trails:**

Maximum group size is 14 hikers, walkers, or runners or 8 bikers or equestrians on trail. Affiliated groups may not travel within 1/4 mile of each other if the total group size exceeds the limits described above.

### **No Posting:**

No signs, posters, banners, or advertising are to be constructed, erected, installed or placed on any Jeffco Open Space lands.

### **Commercial Activity:**

It shall be unlawful to conduct on Open Space Lands a commercial activity including, but not limited to, concessions or an activity that provides a service or product for which a fee is charged, without first obtaining a valid Park Permit.

## Updates to Current Regulations

### **Feeding Wildlife:**

It shall be unlawful to feed, or attempt to feed, any wildlife on Open Space Lands.

**Fine: \$100.00.** It shall be unlawful to store food outside of food storage boxes provided at campsites. Fine: \$100.00

### **Pets:**

It shall be unlawful for any person on Open Space Lands to fail to keep any pet under their custody, control or ownership on a leash and under physical control. "Leash" means a strap, cord or chain ten (10) feet or less in length. **Fine: \$75.00**

It shall be unlawful for any person to have any pet under their custody, control or ownership run freely and not within sight of the owner or off the premises of the dog owner on Open Space Lands. **Fine: \$100.00**

### **Use of Motorized Vehicles:**

It shall be unlawful to operate any motorized vehicle including one wheel and powered scooters on Open Space Lands except on designated public roadways. **Fine: \$100.00**

### **Projectiles and Piloted Craft** (current regulation title is Missiles and Craft):

Except as authorized by law or under this Policy, it shall be unlawful to throw, discharge, launch, operate by remote control or land any type of missile, rocket, or other projectile, or any type of unpiloted car, boat, or unmanned aircraft system (drone), from, on, or above Open Space Lands including waters. **Fine: \$50.00**

Except as authorized by law or under this Policy, it shall be unlawful to launch, land or operate any piloted aircraft or watercraft including, but not limited to, boats, helicopters, airplanes,



# OSAC Notes, continued

ultralights, gliders, hang gliders, paragliders, BASE jumpers, sky divers, powered parachutes or hot air balloons from, on or above Open Space Lands including waters. **Fine: \$200.00**

**Dumping:**

It shall be unlawful to deposit or leave any residentially or commercially generated refuse, trash, landscaping debris, yard waste, animal remains, or any other materials on Open Space Lands. **Fine: \$100.00**

The meeting ended with an Executive Session discussion of a potential land trade.

**June 3, 2021**

The Field Trip was an Executive Session to review the Goltra Property between Guy Gulch and Mount Galbraith on the north side of Clear Creek. The property consists of about 4000 acres and is detailed elsewhere in this newsletter.

**July 3, 2021**

Field Trip: The field trip was to the northwest sector of North Table Mountain park to observe JCOS efforts at managing prairie dogs.

Regular Session was a presentation of the proposed JCOS budget for 2022.

**Funding Sources** - The Jeffco Open Space sales tax projections presume a 3% revenue growth for 2022 bringing the total County share to \$39.8M.

<b>Funding Sources</b>	<b>2022 Proposed Budget</b>
Beginning Estimated Fund Balance	\$17,601,154
Estimated Open Space Sales Tax (County Share)	\$39,787,444
Fees and Interest	\$1,567,711
Grant Reimbursements	\$4,200,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$63,156,309</b>

**Expenditures and Stewardship & Repair Reserve**

- Bond debt service, projected stewardship & operations, park and trail improvements, land acquisitions / partnerships and the Trails Partnership Program are included in the 2022 budget. At the end 2021, one of the two \$30M bonds will be paid off which will free up an additional \$2.2M in bond debt starting in 2022.

The Open Space Financial Plan continues to accumulate stewardship reserves to build up

to \$8M over the course of five years. In its second year, this reserve is at \$2.27M, and an additional \$1.45M will be allocated in 2022 bringing the reserve to \$3.72M in 2022. The following three years 2023 – 2025 another annual allocation of \$1.45M will be added to this reserve bringing it to just over \$8M at the end of 2025. Once this reserve is fully established (\$8M) these funds will be used to complete capital maintenance, repair and replacement projects identified in our asset management program.

## OSAC Notes, continued

<b>Expenditures and Stewardship &amp; Repair</b>	<b>2022 Recommended Budget plus Reserve Allocation</b>
Bond Debt Service	\$2,177,622
Stewardship & Operations	\$19,475,466
Park & Trail Improvements	\$16,710,000
Land Acquisitions / Partnerships	\$7,000,000
Trails Partnership Program	\$3,000,000
Stewardship & Repair Reserve	\$1,450,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$49,813,088</b>

Individual budget items recommended for 2022 are outlined as follows:

<b>Funding Request Category</b>	<b>2022 Budget Recommendations</b>
<b>Stewardship &amp; Operations / Personnel</b> – Ongoing base building funds for eight Visitor Services FTE positions to include one Stewardship Analyst, four Park Service Specialists and three Lead Rangers. Ongoing base building funds for two Community Connections hourly positions to include a Communications Specialist and a Volunteer Specialist. One-time Stewardship request for 14 LTE's and eight Seasonal positions to address building 50 miles of trails; Conservation Greenprint Goal #9 System Trail Expansion.	\$1,579,924
<b>Stewardship &amp; Operations / Programs and Projects</b> – Ongoing Programs include natural resource monitoring, IT, climbing access maintenance, roadway guide signs, Accessibility Transition Plan implementation, park trail construction, Colorado Front Range Trail feasibility study, Land Acquisitions / Partnerships, and the Trails Partnership Program.	\$11,070,000
<b>Park &amp; Trail Improvements</b> – Includes four segments of the Clear Creek Canyon Park trail design and construction and the Rocky Mountain Greenway Trail, Tincup Ridge Park and Alderfer/Three Sisters West Trailhead.	\$13,310,000
<b>Park &amp; Trail Improvement Plan</b> – Includes 11 prioritized projects with the top five projects for design and / or construction projects for Elk Meadow, South Table Mountain, Windy Saddle, Mount Galbraith, and Beaver Ranch Parks.	\$3,400,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$29,359,924</b>

# OSAC Notes, continued

Budget recommendations are aligned to support the 2020-2025 Conservation Greenprint goals. Detailed budget recommendations were reviewed during the July Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee approved acquisition of the 37.5 acres that are under the Public Service power lines adjacent to the east and south sides of the Tincup Park property. Public Service will retain an easement to service the power lines. Acquisition of these acres will allow additional trail development on the Park.

**Executive Session:** Discussion of terms for acquisition of the Guy Gulch and three smaller portions of the Goltra property viewed during the June Study session. Discussion of altering the contract with Martin Marietta to exclude trading the Heritage Square property in exchange for a cash payment.

**August 5, 2021**  
Study Session: Field trip to the Pleasant View Community Park.

**Regular Meeting:**  
The Advisory Committee approved the preliminary budget for 2022 as presented at the July meeting.

When JCOS acquired the South Table Mountain acreage from Coors, public access to the north side was limited by a line-of-sight agreement. JCOS requested a modification of the agreement to allow for access to an overlook by extension of the Lava Loop Trail on the north side of South Table Mountain. OSAC approved the change in the access agreement.

The advisory committee approved the acquisition of 1192 acres from the Goltra Ranch for \$14,543,750.

In 1980 JCOS reached agreement with Martin Marietta for the exchange of 64 acres of Open Space for 131 acres of Martin Marietta land that included the 61-acre property that had been the Heritage Square Amusement Park site. JCOS planned to sell the 61 acres and use the funds for acquisitions. The agreement is being modified to allow Martin Marietta to retain the 131 acres and pay JCOS \$14.5 million which Open Space will use for payment of the Goltra property. OSAC approved the modifications to the exchange agreement.

Executive Session: Discussion on terms of the potential trade of a portion of the Pleasant View Community Park for a trailhead and trail corridors on the present NREL property.

PLAN Jeffco works for open space and we work for you! Please sign up or renew your membership now! Your address label shows the date of your last renewal. Call 303.237.9493 for membership information.

**Our membership rate is:**

**\$35 per year**

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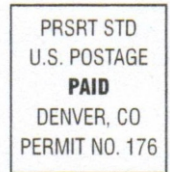
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Jefferson County Citizens for  
Planned Growth with Open Space

PLAN JEFFCO NEWSLETTER

**If you have not!!! Join PLAN Jeffco  
or renew your Membership today!  
form is on page 11**

PLAN Jeffco is the county-wide volunteer citizen's group that organized and drafted the Open Space Resolution that resulted in the formation of the Jefferson County Open Space Program in 1972. We currently function as a watchdog group, observing meetings of the Open Space Advisory Committee, participating in subcommittees, and issues groups, proposing and working for important acquisitions, and keeping citizens informed of what is going on in their Open Space Program. PLAN Jeffco provided the leadership for the successful vote for bonds in 1998.